

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Learning Lagniappe: Educator Extras

Hurricane Camille Photograph Collection

http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/camille

Camille, a category 5 hurricane, made landfall on the Gulf Coast just east of Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, around midnight on August 17, 1969, with winds estimated at 200 miles per hour and tides fifteen to thirty-two feet above normal. As it moved through central Kentucky and into West Virginia and Virginia, it dumped up to thirty-one inches of rain, generating flash floods and landslides. The storm system caused an estimated 259 deaths (three in Cuba, 143 on the Gulf Coast, and 113 in the Virginia floods) and \$1.421 billion in damage. Until hurricanes Andrew (1992) and Katrina (2005), Camille was cited as the largest single act of destruction in United States history.

The Hurricane Camille Photograph Collection consists of seventy-three images related to the aftermath of the storm on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The images were combined from three sources. The United States Air Force produced the first eight (black-and-white) photographs that document Keesler Air Force Base personnel involved in the recovery efforts post-landfall. Al Fred Daniel, a professional photographer from Jackson, Mississippi, created twenty-three black-and-white images of commercial and residential property damage. The largest piece of the collection consists of forty-two color photographs taken by John W. Nicholson Jr., also from Jackson, who captured images of the destruction, especially to churches, along most of the Gulf Coast, including Biloxi, Mississippi City, Gulfport, Long Beach, Pass Christian, and Bay St. Louis, Mississippi.

Subjects that can be addressed within this Digital Archive:

Tracking hurricanes and other severe storms; the effect of disasters on local people and economies; role of the military and other organizations in disaster relief.

Suggested Classroom Activities:

Using the Internet, maps, and other sources, examine how the Mississippi Gulf Coast has changed from before Hurricane Camille to today and identify which changes have occurred as a result of hurricanes or other disasters (such as the 2010 BP oil spill).

For more lessons and activities based on the Digital Archives and other collections visit the Classroom Materials page on our website at

<http://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/learn/classroom-materials/lesson-plans-and-teaching-units/>

Teacher Discussion Guide

Use images from the MDAH Digital Archive entitled “Hurricane Camille Photograph Collection” (found at http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/camille) to lead your class in a discussion analyzing and interpreting the following images:

1. Type “military” in the “search for keyword” box.

- a. What role did military personnel play in the aftermath of Camille? Military personnel (specifically Air Force personnel from Keesler Air Force Base) provided supplies and medical care for those affected by the storm and they conducted extensive clean-up exercises to clear the coast of debris.
- b. Who performs jobs such as this in the aftermath of disasters today? The military continues to provide disaster relief today, along with organizations such as military reserve and National Guard units, the Red Cross, fire police departments, FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), and MEMA (Mississippi Emergency Management Agency).

2. Type “church” in the “search for keyword” box. What can you learn about the impact of Camille on religious life from these photos? How did residents respond? The images show that numerous churches along the coast were damaged (some beyond repair) by Camille. The images of the outdoor church service reveal that despite the lack of a building, church communities persevered and came together in the face of disaster.

3. Type “North American Mainland” in the “search for keyword” box. How have weather tracking and weather warning systems changed from those used during Hurricane Camille in 1969? Today, satellites are used extensively to predict and track the path and severity of hurricanes, tornadoes, typhoons, and other types of severe weather all over the world. With the help of modern technology such as the Internet and increasingly sophisticated cell phones, warning systems provide individuals in the paths of storms more warning time than ever before, allowing them to secure their homes and leave affected areas as necessary.

4. Type “grounded barge” in the “search for keyword” box. How does a storm as devastating as Camille affect transportation? As can be seen in this image, waves and wind blew numerous boats and barges out of the harbor and onto the mainland, where they landed on roads, in fields, and destroyed buildings. This, along with debris from destroyed buildings, broken trees and strewn vegetation, cluttered roadways and impeded rescue efforts.

5. Type “Ballymere” in the “search for keyword” box.

- a. What effect did Camille have on historic buildings and places on the coast? As seen by the bent landmark sign, Camille damaged or destroyed numerous buildings and sites of historic significance.
- b. How do you think Camille affected the economy of the coast? By damaging tourist sites such as historic buildings, museums, and beaches, Camille dissuaded individuals from vacationing on the coast, resulting in a loss of revenue for local businesses such as hotels and restaurants. It also interrupted maritime activities such as fishing and shipping, which would have affected those industries around the country and the world.

6. Compare the images of Hurricane Camille with those of Hurricane Katrina found in the MDAH Digital Archives at http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/series/katrina. What similarities or differences can be seen between the two events?